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Ukrainian Crisis as an Ongoing Threat to Regional Security

MYKOLA KAPITONENKO

Introduction

With the rise of turmoil and instability in Europe, once world's most peaceful place, security is returning to the focus of both research and decision-making in the region¹. A large-scale crisis in and around Ukraine generated far-reaching consequences and affected security arrangements on several dimensions. Although it is notoriously hard to measure and graduate levels of the affection, it could be presumed that security – perceived and actual – has been damaged at national, bilateral, regional, and global levels.

Ukraine has lost control over about 7% of its territory as a result of the annexation of the Crimea by Russia and an on-going armed conflict in the East of the country. Ukraine's real GDP fell about 19% in recent two years². The country suffered over 9.000 casualties and more than 20.000 injured since April, 2014, according to UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights³. Along with that, the country's security is challenged by a continuing military tangle with Russia, a powerful and revisionist neighbor, set to deny Ukraine's sovereignty, including the right to carry out an independent foreign policy.

Bilaterally, almost all regional pairs of relations, to which Russia is a party, experienced a dramatic strengthening of security dilemmas. Any use of military force is costly in a sense that it raises suspicion, increases negative-scenario thinking, and invites partners to counterbalance. On a bilateral level Russian revisionism generates security challenges for all its neighbors, including the EU and China. When the world's second military is put into operation with a clear intention to challenge the world order by undermining

¹ Armed Conflict by Region, 1946-2014, Charts&Graphs, Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala Universitet // http://www.pcr.uu.se/digitalAssets/66/66314_1armed-conflict-by-region-1946-2014.pdf, Retrieved Jan., 8, 2016.

² The World Bank Ukraine Economic Update, October, 5, 2015 // <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/pubdocs/publicdoc/2015/10/34131444107623273/UA-MacroeconUpdate-Oct-2015-en.pdf>, Retrieved Jan., 8, 2016.

³ "Ukraine Conflict Has Left More than 9,000 Dead, Says UN", *The Guardian*, December, 9, 2015.

territorial integrity of a sovereign country, one shouldn't be very optimistic about existing bilateral security arrangements.

The same holds true about regional setting. Russia's power projecting capacities are limited, and its geopolitical revisionism is unlikely to be successful in the end. However, it remains a regional power, capable of shaping and influencing regional political agenda. Europe, and most significantly Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region, will bear most immediate costs of Russian assertive foreign policy. Security regimes operating in Europe before 2014 turn out to be ineffective and some of them even obsolete. Most international security organizations proved to be of limited capacity. The EU's Neighborhood Policy and Eastern Partnership Project are in need for a deep reform⁴. Russia's most valued interests are concentrated in its neighborhood, the so called "near abroad". The Kremlin has already indicated how far it could go in defending them against any perceived threats. Altogether that creates a completely new strategic environment in Europe – and in Eastern Europe in particular.

Global security frameworks have also been damaged. Issues of nuclear non-proliferation, territorial integrity, sovereignty are so clearly at stake, that the Ukrainian crisis will inevitably produce changes in a way states think of security and perceive threats. Even if Russia is unable to successfully challenge the world order, the very attempt is significantly affecting international system.

Three hypotheses are put forward in the paper. First, instability in Ukraine spills over national boundaries to generate regional challenges. Second, EU's lack of security strategy – and in particular strategy towards Russia – will be compensated by amendments to national strategies of member-states. Third, with the level of destabilization rising, the region of Eastern Europe will reappear as a geopolitical area dominated by the Russian influence.

Defining Regional (In)Security

Several considerations should be laid down to shape theoretical framework of the study. First, the concept of security is still heavily influenced by political realism. Second, Russia's recent policies enhance hard power, geopolitical, and – specifically – military components of regional security. Third, realism is not enough: perceptions and ways of securitization matter.

Although scientific understanding of security went well beyond the realm of military issues, it is still perceived by most as a matter of survival, physical capacities or, more broadly, power. That brings security into the line of

⁴ For more details see Mykola Kapitonenko, "The European Neighborhood Policy's Eastern Dimension: The Impact of the Ukrainian Crisis", *Neighborhood Policy Paper*, July 2015 // [http://www.khas.edu.tr/cms/cies/dosyalar/files/NeighbourhoodPolicyPaper\(15\).pdf](http://www.khas.edu.tr/cms/cies/dosyalar/files/NeighbourhoodPolicyPaper(15).pdf).

core concepts of political realism. This approach sees world politics as a realm of states, "...continuously preparing for, actively involved in, or recovering from organized violence in the form of war"⁵. Consequently, security in realism is first and foremost about military capacity and defending against threats to survival of a state. The key problem here is the difficulty in defining when defending one's own security starts to threaten security of the others. Within political realism security, like power, is relative. One's security, as well as one's power, can be measured only against security and power of another. When one grows stronger, whatever measurement of strength is applied, others are becoming weaker. If becoming stronger equals to getting more secure, then more security for one actor leads to less security for the other. The resulting "security dilemma" illustrates strategic thinking dominated by realist assumptions. States may become stronger in absolute terms, but they don't necessarily become stronger in relation to others. Due to difficulties with perception, there is no way to guarantee that the rise of one's defensive capabilities does not threaten security of the others. Thus, states enhancing their military or other power components, often find themselves becoming, in fact, less secure in the end. As a state-centric paradigm, realism focuses on national level, treating "security" predominantly as "national security". In short security studies for realists is about "threat, use, and control of military force"⁶.

Until recently it could seem that realists are better in explaining past, than present. Military force dominated world politics before the age of globalization, interdependence, and integration. Post-bipolar world seemed to discourage direct application of force, putting high costs on war and violence. States' physical survival seemed to be relatively secure, thus realists' main concern about it looked overestimated.

Things have changed after Russia annexed the Crimea from Ukraine. All of a sudden, military tools seemed to become effective again. Although the post-Soviet space has traditionally been quite prone to hard-power, taking into account a number of low-intensity conflicts and several regional wars, including the recent Russian-Georgian one, annexation of a sovereign state's territory was almost unthinkable. Thus, Moscow's choice over Crimea and – more generally – Ukraine was a complete strategic surprise.

Arguably, shifting perceptions of power and security among states is the most damaging long-term outcome of this decision. Russia is a clear hard-power hegemon in the Eastern European region, accounting for about 80% of the broader region's military expenditures. However, Russian dominance has been deterred by NATO, which provides most of the former socialist republics

⁵ Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1985, p. 52.

⁶ Stephen Walt, "The Renaissance of Security Studies", *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 2, 1991, p. 212.

protection from any restoration of the Russian control over the region. At some point Russian leaders seemed to grasp the simple correlation: the more assertive and aggressive Russia's stance is in the region, the bigger is the desire of the smaller states to join NATO and, more generally, move westwards. Sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries' of the region was the key element of the regional security arrangements. That is no longer the case, and none of the states of the region can be fully confident of its security.

In the same way, theoretical view on security should be adapted. Moving away from national level of security studies brings strategic interaction into focus. Security within such context is not so much about possessing resources or advantage, but about patterns of interactions, in which decisions and results are mutually interdependent. On regional and global levels states relate their security to power and intentions of others. Security policy is thus not about possessing, but about perceiving, responding, and signaling. Within this context, Moscow's decision to annex the Crimea from Ukraine generates profound consequences. It produces both material and perceptual outcomes, undermining regional balance of power as well as normative foundations of regional security.

States plan their responses according not only to actual state of things, but to perceptions. The way states perceive each other plays an exceptionally important role in their strategic planning. Common norms, practices, as well as historic record and reputation, become key factors of decision-making, quite contrary to what realism suggests. Consequently, perceptions become important elements of regional security. According to Barry Buzan, "because security is relational, one cannot understand the national security of any given state without understanding the international pattern of security interdependence in which it is embedded"⁷.

Theory of regional security complexes states that the way regional powers perceive each other is as important as actual distribution of power among them. A level of threat which is mutually felt among the states shapes the regional security complex. It is structurally durable, but flexible in response to historical changes⁸.

After seizing control over Crimea Russia has become a dominant power in the Black Sea region. Plans to strengthen the Black Sea fleet by spending \$2.2 by 2020 and providing it with new warships already in 2014-2015⁹ have been added with the new edition of the country's military doctrine¹⁰. Crimea's

⁷ Barry Buzan, *People, States, and Fear: An Agenda For International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*, Prentice Hall, Saddle River, NJ, 1991, p. 187.

⁸ Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, p. 45.

⁹ Announced by Russian Defense Minister Shoigu, *Interfax*, May, 6, 2014.

¹⁰ *Военная доктрина Российской Федерации (Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation)*, 30.12.2014 // <http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/41d527556bec8deb3530.pdf>, Retrieved Jan., 22, 2016.

annexation also shifted perceptions of Russia's intentions. Applying military force, however hybrid it may be does not send positive signals. Russia will be taken as a threat not only to regional security arrangements, but also to physical security of neighboring states. Consequently, they will adopt different security policies, built upon negative scenarios, counter-balancing, and suspicion. Most likely, sub-regional security system will get back to containment and balancing with a more active involvement of NATO component.

Russia's military budget is about three times bigger than that of Turkey, six times bigger than the rest of the Black Sea countries' combined¹¹. For the first time since the breakup of the USSR Moscow enjoys such significant geopolitical advantages in the region, while demonstrating such a strong intention to challenge existing "rules of the game".

The same logic holds for a broader region of Eastern Europe. Russian revisionism already stimulates increase in defense spending all over the region, as well as growing efforts to ensure containment of Russia. In realist terms Russia is perceived as a hard threat to national security by an increasing number of its neighbors. Adaptation of their security policies will turn Eastern Europe into a much more hostile environment than it used to be.

Before 2014 regional security system operated on a quite mixed foundation of containment, trust, and international regimes. Basic rules have been shaped and observed. Although Russia enjoyed military advantage in the region, many states have joined NATO which continued to be a main tool of military containment, while the EU was prioritizing soft and normative dimension of its security policy.

Russian revisionism will lead to an increase of geopolitical component in regional security, however will not turn it back to completely realist track altogether. What is happening in Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region will remain a part of a broader context, which continues to discourage direct application of force. But at the same time rise of the security dilemma and negative perception within the regional security complex will lead to a growing demand for hard power and/or multilateral mechanisms capable to provide effective containment.

Sources of Ukrainian Crisis

Several competing explanations of the crisis in Ukraine can be put forward. Equally, a number of answers could be provided as to what kind of conflict it is.

¹¹ Global Firepower. Defense Budget by Country, 2015 // <http://www.globalfirepower.com/defense-spending-budget.asp>, Retrieved March, 14, 2016.

A decision to annex Crimea has been taken by the Russian President on February, 22, 2014, just after the Maidan revolution in Kyiv overthrew the then President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich. Three months earlier Yanukovich halted preparations for signing the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union, thus triggering mass protests, known as Euromaidan.

Accordingly, the beginning of the crisis could be dated 1) to Vladimir Putin's decision of February, 22, 2014; 2) to Viktor Yanukovich's decision not to sign the Association Agreement in November, 2013; 3) to earlier events which made the crisis much more probable.

The latter could be grouped into internal and external factors, affecting the likelihood of the crisis. Although the crisis in Ukraine has been triggered by a foreign policy decision not to sign the Association Agreement with the EU, it flowed from numerous problems within Ukraine. Mass protests themselves quickly shifted from demands to sign the Agreement to broader requests of internal political transformations. Since negotiations over Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU started in 2007, the document has always been something more for Ukrainians than just a foreign policy option. Bringing Ukraine closer to the EU meant more democracy, improved legislature, and better economic standards, i.e. internal transformations. These transformations have been strongly demanded by Ukrainians by November 2013.

On the other hand, Ukraine's drift towards the EU brought about geopolitical consequences, most importantly for Russia. Letting Ukraine sign the Agreement was perceived in Moscow as equaling to losing the key country of the "Russian world" from the Kremlin's orbit, something Russia was completely unable to accept. The Association Agreement, as well as the EaP as a whole, provided political, economic, and trade frameworks for cooperation and normative convergence; but it completely lacked hard security and geopolitical dimension.

Ukrainian state weakness played a crucial role among internal drivers of the crisis. In 2013 Ukraine was placed 117th in the "warning" group of Failed States Index by the Fund for Peace research¹². Dramatic weakening of the state in 2010-2013 is the key reason for the current crisis in Ukraine. The weakening of the state can be followed by its collapse, and this is no longer just a theoretical assumption for Ukraine. The depth and scope of the crisis, which hit the country in late 2013, provoked a series of bifurcation points, leaving decision-makers short of time and options.

There are 12 criteria weighted – social, economic, and political – in the Failed States Index total score. They are reflecting a state's performance in securing the citizens, providing them with sustainable economic growth, as well

¹² *The Failed States Index 2013*. // <http://ffp.statesindex.org/rankings-2013-sortable>, Retrieved Feb., 22, 2014.

as ensuring continuous social development. In the most general way the strength of a state corresponds to its ability to generate security for all social groups and individuals.

The system of checks-and-balances was ruined in Ukraine after in 2010 the President got additional power by the Constitutional Court decision, which returned country's old Constitution of 1996. Further centralization of power was accompanied by submission of a judiciary branch, marginalization of the Parliament, and violations of the freedom of press. As a result, already in 2011 Ukraine slide down in Democracy Index from a "flawed democracy" to a "hybrid regime"¹³.

These developments produced a problem of state legitimacy, since the last presidential elections were held under different constitutional setting, and the newly obtained power of the President was not a part of it. It's symptomatic, that Ukraine got 7.8 out of 10 on the "Legitimacy of the state criteria" in 2013 Failed States Index – a second to 8.0 on "Rise of Factionalized Elites". Authoritarian tendencies were accompanied by rise of corruption and increased influence of police and special service. At the same time, state effectiveness in economic and social areas declined. A corrupted and ineffective state was no longer able to provide neither individual nor national security. And this has much more than only domestic consequences: weak states tend to produce insecurity in a regional scale.

Ukraine's weakness made it vulnerable to external pressures. One of the most vivid examples could be found on a bilateral level of Ukrainian-Russian relations not long before the beginning of the crisis.

In the summer of 2013, Russian-Ukrainian trade suffered a major setback. On July 25, more than 40 Ukrainian companies were marked as "risky" by the Russian Federal Customs Service. On August 14, the list was broadened to include all Ukrainian exporters. Ukrainian goods were blocked at the Russian-Ukrainian border. Earlier, in April, first signs of a serious trade dispute appeared. Ukraine dropped quotas for caking coal, imported from Russia and introduced recycling fee for automobiles, while Russia responded with canceling quotas for Ukrainian pipes – a strategically important Ukrainian export. Later on the Russian Federal Service for Supervision of Consumer Rights Protection and Human Welfare found harmful additives in Ukrainian sweets, while Ukraine limited import of Russian wheat. Events in August led to a *de facto* blockade of Ukrainian import to Russia and signaled the beginning of a full-scale trade war.

¹³ Democracy Index 2011. *Democracy under Stress. A Report from the Economist Intelligence Unit.* // http://www.sida.se/Global/About%20Sida/S%C3%A5%20arbetar%20vi/EIU_Democracy_Index_Dec2011.pdf, Retrieved Jan., 25, 2016.

By that time Ukraine was about to finish a long-lasting negotiation process with the European Union over the Association Agreement. In November a final decision was expected to be taken at the Vilnius Summit of the Eastern Partnership. It was strongly believed in Russia, that as soon as Ukraine signs the Association Agreement with the EU, it will fall out of the Russian sphere of influence, leaving thus any major Russian geopolitical project senseless. The most significant project of this kind – the Eurasian Union – was currently underway aiming at restoring Russian influence in the so-called “near abroad” – the former Soviet republics, Russia’s immediate neighborhood. To this end Russian leadership applied a variety of tools, most significantly – monopoly on natural gas supplies (as well as dependency of some of the neighbors on energy resources from Russia in general), collective security mechanisms and presence in the conflict zones of the post-Soviet space, and economic pressure. Russia’s geopolitical experiments have already resulted in conflict escalation in Georgia and dramatic gas wars with Ukraine. The Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union has been perceived as something which could stop Russian geopolitical ambitions before they even started to be implemented.

Given the way Russia treats its priority national interests, the crisis could be dated back to launch of the Eastern Partnership Project (EaP) by the EU, to which Ukraine, as well as a number of other post-Soviet states, became a target country¹⁴. From this perspective, a key problem with the EaP was the absence of any hard security component as well lack of any significant strategy towards Russia.

Ukrainian government’s immediate decision to halt preparations for signing the Association Agreement between Ukraine and EU from November, 21, 2013 seems a reactive response to the Russian pressure and a logical outcome of Ukraine’s long-lasting troublesome foreign policy, aimed at extracting preferences from both Russia and the West. Corrupted Ukrainian leadership, heavily dependent on the Kremlin, opted to give up its European integration aspirations. That triggered mass protests in Kyiv and subsequently formed up a different setting for another decision to be taken – by Vladimir Putin.

With Russia’s move to occupy and annex Crimea, the Ukrainian crisis moved into the next stage. That decision doesn’t seem to be an easy one. It directly challenged norms and rules of European security and global order. It undermined territorial integrity of Ukraine, to which Russia has been a guarantor according to the Budapest memorandum of 1994. Finally, it set up a

¹⁴ Mykola Kapitonenko, Oleh Shamshur, Valeryi Chalyi, “Ukraine and EU: Challenges that Loom Ahead”, *On Wider Europe*, February, 2012 // file:///C:/Users/Sony/Downloads/kapitonenkoetal_ukraineeu_feb12.pdf, Retrieved Jan., 24, 2016.

very unstable environment for Russia itself, leaving it with an extremely high level of uncertainty and risk.

Taking all that into account, President Putin cast the die. Most likely, it has been a result of a perceived strategic disadvantage, or even failure. Russia has long ago securitized and prioritized Ukraine in its foreign policy. Any Ukrainian move westwards seemed like a geopolitical blow with catastrophic consequences. Russia's impotence to stop Ukraine's rapprochement with the West resulted in a situation when regime of Viktor Yanukovich became the last hope. Its fall was perceived in the Kremlin as the beginning of a chain reaction, with a catastrophic geopolitical defeat for Russia in the end. With that in mind Putin decided to minimize losses.

Two years have passed since then. Dynamics of the Ukrainian crisis is, on the one hand, familiar and follows the patterns on other post-Soviet "frozen conflicts". However, on the other hand, its scope, scale, and significance make it a definite turning point for European security system.

Another "Frozen Conflict"?

Among several possible scenarios in Eastern Ukraine, another "frozen conflict" seems most likely so far. It could be argued, that "freezing" the conflict might be the least of evils and the safest option for all the parties involved. The scenario of a "frozen conflict" is well-known from the previous experience. It minimizes probability of another military escalation and imposes a certain political framework upon the conflict. It also enables dialogue and negotiations. These considerations, inter alia, are referred to by the advocates of the Minsk agreements in Ukraine. For Europe, however, this could bring new risks both on regional and national levels.

There are already several ongoing "frozen conflicts" on the post-Soviet space¹⁵. Although different in scopes, geography, and historical background, they all are utilized by Russia with the view to expand, strengthen or hold control over the region, specified by the Kremlin as a sphere of vital national interests.

In all cases Russia's strategy is the same: internal conflicts in various states are used to maintain zones of controlled instability and influence foreign policies of respective countries. In cases of Georgia and Armenia there are historic and ethnic backgrounds to internal conflicts, which made things easier for the Kremlin. Moscow's strategy was mostly about balancing in favor of separatist/disputed regions and making central governments vulnerable to

¹⁵ Mykola Kapitonenko, "Resolving Post-Soviet 'Frozen Conflicts': Is Regional Integration Helpful?", *Caucasian Review of International Affairs*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2009, pp. 37-44.

possible more active support of their counterparts. That brought results in Armenia, which generally follows Russian policies in the region, being too dependent on weapons and energy, as well as standing not very confident against Azerbaijan, a principal geopolitical opponent. It turned out to be more difficult in Georgia, where Russia had to directly imply military force in what is known as Eight Days War of 2008. As a result, there appeared two non-recognized entities on Georgian territory while Russia lost most of its influence over the rest of the country.

Transnistrian conflict in Moldova is somewhat different. There are neither ethnic differences, nor significant historic background to it. Instead, there is a created and supported identity cleavage, mostly along linguistic lines. The so-called Transnistrian republic inhabited by Moldavians, Ukrainians, and Russians had once been Moldova's principal industrial area. When the USSR broke up, local elites turned against the republican government to stay in power. They received support from Russia and constructed a specific kind of identity within the boundaries of unrecognized republic. Since then Transnistrian conflict has been used by the Kremlin to block Moldova's access to NATO and/or the EU.

There is a fundamental risk for European security generated by Russia's tactics of exploiting "frozen conflicts" in a common neighborhood. Russia's bet is on weak states, while Europe needs them strong.

The whole idea behind the European Neighborhood Policy is to improve security through creating a stable, peaceful, and democratic environment. At the very core, it is a neoliberal idea. It implies that norms and values can shape security and foreign policies. It is also close to democratic peace theory in recognizing correlation between democracy and peace.

It seemed that Russian decision-makers, with all regard to realistic, Clausewitz-style, thinking, also took norms and regimes into account. The Kremlin relied on autocracies, inhibiting any democratic changes in Russia's geopolitical environment. They also bet on corrupted, ineffective leadership in neighboring countries, vulnerable to Russian influence and dependent on Russia energy supplies. Preserving inefficiency and weakness in the neighborhood was Moscow's strategic goal.

But as it was, such an aim was directly opposite to what Europe wanted. The future of EaP's target countries – Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan – was important not only for themselves, but for European security as well. That contradiction between EU's and Russia's strategic goals has largely contributed into the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and continues to be a major security challenge.

"Frozen conflicts" are also used by the Kremlin to manipulate foreign policies of target countries. Given the difficulties facing countries with territorial disputes in joining NATO, "frozen conflicts" are seen by Moscow as

reliable preventers. In the same fashion, poor and ineffective economies are hardly welcome in the EU. Thus, through conflicts like these, Russia prevents any move westwards by the target countries and increases their dependency on itself.

If Donbas turns into a larger Transnistria-type conflict area in Ukraine, Europe will face a number of challenges. Some of them are already well-known, and they are mostly in soft security area. They include smuggling, arms sales, and illegal human traffic. A “frozen conflict” will also significantly slow down reforms in Ukraine, enhance corruption and, more generally, keep Ukraine weak.

A weak Ukraine, in turn, will make Europe more vulnerable to Russian pressure. Moreover, that will raise the probability of reinstalling bipolarity in Europe. Bipolarity is usually no good news for international stability. It generates zero-sum situations and enforces states to pursue relative, instead of absolute gains. This, in turn, leads to sharp decrease in the level of international interdependence and cooperation, since the parties involved start to care much more about the way mutual gains are distributed, not how they are maximized. Bipolar systems are thus unstable and generate high probabilities of violent conflict, while keeping stabilization mechanisms at a low level of efficiency¹⁶. That is why the closer the region is to a stance of bipolarity, the more dangerous it will become. Growing influence of Russia and limited or ineffective activities of regional security organizations contribute into this.

General framework of security is shaped at the regional level. Similarities among conflicts in Moldova, Georgia and Nagorno-Karabakh are resulting from general effects produced by regional international system. Arguably, long-lasting and comprehensive settlement of the “frozen” (sometimes referred to as “not-so-frozen”) conflicts is impossible without transformations at the regional level. All “frozen” conflicts have regional and national levels of causality. Regional arrangements play a pivotal role in how security is achieved or threatened. Balance of power or a regional hegemon inspire activities of international organizations and coalition-building. Constellations of regional forces together with shared weaknesses define probabilities and general ways of conflict initiation and settlement.

If “frozen conflicts” are preserved in the region, security on normative basis will be very hard to achieve. The region will slide to geopolitical rivalry, the EU is unwilling and not ready to face.

¹⁶ Comparing stability of bipolar and multipolar structures has been among field's most debatable issues. Theoretical claims split. See Karl Deutsch, J. Singer, “Multipolar Power Systems and International Stability”, *World Politics*, vol. 16, no. 3, 1964, pp. 390-406; Kenneth Waltz, “The Stability of a Bipolar World”, *Daedalus*, vol. 93, no. 3, 1964, pp. 319-341; Daniel Geller, J. Singer *Nations at War: A Scientific Study of International Conflict*, Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Conclusions

In a world before 2014, building security strategy on neoliberal assumptions seemed to be a good choice. Europe enjoyed high levels of interdependence, stability, and peacefulness. Using hard power, or even threatening it, seemed highly unlikely.

European security arrangements have been for quite long pillared by non-use of force, freedom of choice, and normative power. With the Russian revisionism on the rise, none of this is any longer a case. Transnistrian “frozen conflict” has been largely an exception to the European security system, by now it is becoming a common place. If succeeding in annexation of territories and creating quasi-states out of nowhere, Russia will not only further destabilize Eastern Europe, but also undermine key principles of European security, which have been in place since the end of the Second World War. In such a case Europe will have security risks, including secessionism, terrorism, and hybrid warfare multiplied.

While a neoliberal approach to security is built on interdependence and thus common interests, a realistic one emphasizes differences and conflicts. The more realism is injected into European security, the less common it will become. At first, fragmentation of security will lead to regionalization, and consequently – to competing national policies. Efforts on creating EU’s common foreign and security policy have been taken comparatively successful due to neoliberal perceptions among European states. With more suspicion and less trust countries will find it increasingly difficult to build common policies.

For quite long the EU’s attempts to construct common foreign and security policy have been based on democratic values, economic and financial capabilities, and attractiveness of the way of life – what is shortly called “soft power”. Inability to check the Russian challenge will result in a quick depreciation of that. Arms races, military build-ups, suspicion, and mistrust will form a new system of axes in Europe. It is already taking place, however in a smaller scale. New realities in security arrangements are being tested in the East of Ukraine, and the experiment is going to demonstrate most likely ways of further development.